

The Black is Booklist is a list of recent books concerning the African American experience. It is published as part of the Boston Public Library's observance of Black History Month each year.

black is...

Books about the African American Experience
Booklist for Adults • 2016

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FICTION

The Turner House

By Angela Flournoy

In this family saga, the Turner children decide the fate of the family house.

FICTION FLOURNOY A

The Cherokee Rose: A Novel of Gardens and Ghosts

By Tiya Miles

Three women investigate the history of a Cherokee plantation.

FICTION MILES T

God Help the Child

By Toni Morrison

Bride is haunted by her abusive past. Her mother learns that “what you do to children matters. And they might never forget.”

FICTION MORRISON T

Grant Park

By Leonard Pitts, Jr.

Two former Civil Rights workers become involved in a racially charged conspiracy.

FICTION PITTS L

Jam on the Vine: A Novel

By LaShonda Katrice Barnett

Ivoe Williams escapes her segregated southern town, gets a college education, and moves to Kansas City where she establishes an African American newspaper.

FICTION BARNETT L

Loving Day: A Novel

By Mat Johnson

Warren Duffy returns to the United States to meet his daughter for the first time and to live in the haunted house he inherited from his father.

FICTION JOHNSON M

Only the Strong: An American Novel

By Jabari Asim

In a 1970s midwestern town, the lives of an ex-hitman, pediatrician, mobster, and a college student intersect. The author is a professor at Emerson College.

FICTION ASIM J

Pleasantville

By Attica Locke

Environmental lawyer Jay Porter takes on a case on behalf of the town of Pleasantville against a sinister corporate entity when a young girl goes missing. The author is a writer and producer for the television series *Empire*.

FICTION LOCKE A

The Star Side of Bird Hill

By Naomi Jackson

Sisters Phaedra and Dionne are sent from their home in Brooklyn to Bird Hill, Barbados, to live with their grandmother Hyacinth, a midwife and a practitioner of obeah, a local spiritual practice.

FICTION JACKSON N

International

The Fishermen: A Novel

By Chigozie Obioma

In 1990s Nigeria, Benjamin and his brothers skip school to go fishing then meet a man who gives them a terrifying prediction.

FICTION OBIOMA C

This House Is Not for Sale

By E. C. Osondu

This book tells the story of a family who lives in an isolated African village. Grandpa, the family patriarch, and the family house hold the family and the community together.

FICTION OSONDU E

Under the Udala Trees

By Chinelo Okparanta

During the Nigerian Civil War, eleven-year-old Ijeoma is sent away for safety. While in exile she falls in love with another displaced girl from another tribe.

FICTION OKPARANT C

Urban

Games Divas Play

By Angela Burt-Murray

Someone is stalking NBA wife Vanessa King. She turns to her friend Nia Bullock, print and web editor-in-chief of *DivaDish*, for help.

FICTION BURTMURR A

How Can I Be Down?

By Brenda Hampton

Drug dealer Kiley Jacoby Abrams discovers he has more problems than usual. Unreliable friends, his brother, and dishonest women cause him to move to St. Louis for a fresh start.

URBAN FICTION HAMPTON B

Lady Elect 2: Lady Arykah Reigns

By Nikita Lynette Nichols

Arykah Miles-Howell returns to church shortly after being assaulted and losing her baby.

URBAN FICTION NICHOLS N

The Perfect Revenge

By Lutishia Lovely

Jacqueline Tate is released from prison and seeks revenge on Nathan Carver and his extended family.

URBAN FICTION LOVELY L

A Moment of Silence: Midnight III

By Sister Souljah

In this third installment of his story, Midnight's faith and sense of self-control are tested by the injustice and racism surrounding the African American community.

URBAN FICTION SOULJAH

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NONFICTION

Biography/Memoir

Alex Haley and the Books That Changed a Nation

By Robert J. Norrell

This is the first biography of Alex Haley, author of *Roots* and *The Autobiography of Malcom X*, two books that exposed Americans to African American history. BIOG E185.97.H24 N68 2015

Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth

By John Szwed

Using recently found materials, the author describes how Billie Holiday’s personal experiences influenced her music.

BIOG ML420.H58 S99 2015

The Education of Kevin Powell: A Boy’s Journey into Manhood

By Kevin Powell

Hip-hop journalist, poet, and activist Kevin Powell describes his early life of poverty, his rise as a journalist and activist, and his issues with addiction and depression.

BIOG PS3566.O83253 Z46 2015

The Face That Changed It All: A Memoir

By Beverly Johnson with

Allison Samuels

Beverly Johnson, the first African American supermodel on the cover of *Vogue* magazine, talks about her rise to success.

BIOG HD6073.M77 J63 2015

Finding Samuel Lowe: China, Jamaica, Harlem

By Paula Williams Madison

Samuel Lowe, the author’s grandfather, lived in Kingston with a Jamaican woman and their daughter until his Chinese wife arrived and irreparably changed the family’s life.

BIOG E184.A1 M22 2015x

Florynce “Flo” Kennedy: The Life of a Black Feminist Radical

By Sherie M. Randolph

This book is a biography of Florynce Kennedy, a groundbreaking attorney and a black power and feminist activist.

BIOG KF373.K45 R36 2015

George Washington Carver: A Life

By Christina Vella

This is a comprehensive biography of the distinguished scientist, inventor, artist, and scholar.

BIOG S417.C3 V45 2015

Miss Jessie’s: Creating a Successful Business from Scratch—Naturally

By Miko Branch

Miko Branch provides both a family memoir and a business guide based on her family’s experience building up Miss Jessie’s, the natural hair company.

BIOG TT965 .B733 2015x

Negroland: A Memoir

By Margo Jefferson

Margo Jefferson discusses her upbringing among the African American elite.

BIOG F548.9.N4 J44 2015

Power Forward: My Presidential Education

By Reggie Love

Reggie Love played basketball at Duke University, worked in Senator Obama’s mailroom, and later served as President Obama’s personal aide.

E901.1 .L68 A3 2015

Spectacle: The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga

By Pamela Newkirk

The life of Ota Benga is shrouded in myth. This book unearths the true ordeal of Ota Benga, a four-foot-eleven-inch Congolese man who, in 1906, was held captive alongside an orangutan at the New York Zoological Gardens.

BIOG DT 650.4 .B46 N49 2015x

Street Poison: The Biography of Iceberg Slim

By Justin Gifford

This book is a biography of Robert “Iceberg Slim” Beck, the original chronicler of urban America. He influenced ’70s “Blaxploitation,” hip-hop, and twenty-first-century urban fiction cultures.

BIOG PS3552.E25 Z64 2015

The Wind in the Reeds: A Storm, a Play, and the City That Would Not Be Broken

By Wendell Pierce

Producer and actor Wendell Pierce tells the story of how he helped to rebuild Pontchartrain Park, his family’s neighborhood in New Orleans, following Hurricane Katrina.

BIOG PN2287.P5395 A3 2015

Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand in the Sun, and Be Your Own Person

By Shonda Rhimes

The creator of *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Scandal* describes how she transformed her life by opening her heart and mind by saying “yes.”

BIOG PN1992.4.R515 A3 2015

Expressions

Black Broadway: African Americans on the Great White Way

By Stewart F. Lane

Using words and pictures, the author, a Broadway producer and historian, describes a century of theater contributions by African Americans.

PN2270.A35 L36 2015

If Someone Says “You Complete Me,” Run!

By Whoopi Goldberg

The award-winning author and host of *The View* gives frank advice on how to achieve happiness in a relationship without losing yourself in the process.

HQ800 .G65 2015x

Soul Food Love: Healthy Recipes Inspired by One Hundred Years of Cooking in a Black Family

By Alice Randall and Caroline Randall Williams

A mother and daughter tweak their family’s traditional recipes to preserve their history and flavors while reducing the fat and calories.

TX715 .R2136 2015

History and Contemporary Issues

Between the World and Me

By Ta-Nehisi Coates

The award-winning author writes a letter to his son on the reality of racism in the United States and its impact on his own life.

E185.615 .C6335 2015

Beyond Freedom’s Reach: A Kidnapping in the Twilight of Slavery

By Adam Rothman

During Reconstruction, Rose Herera traveled to Cuba from New Orleans to rescue her enslaved children.

E185.93.L6 R58 2015

Child, Please: How Mama’s Old-School Lessons Helped Me Check Myself before I Wrecked Myself

By Ylonda Gault Cavinness

In this memoir, the author describes how her parenting style altered to reflect her mother’s traditional style after her third child was born.

E185.86 .C36 2015x

Delta Jewels: In Search of My Grandmother’s Wisdom

By Alysia Burton Steele

Author and photographer Alysia Burton Steele photographed fifty female church elders in the Mississippi Delta.

F347.M6.S74 2015

Forgotten: The Untold Story of D-Day’s Black Heroes, at Home and at War

By Linda Hervieux

This book tells the story of the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, a unit of African American soldiers who landed at Normandy and were the unsung heroes of D-Day.

D769.343 320th .H467 2015

Fracture: Barack Obama, the Clintons, and the Racial Divide

By Joy-Ann Reid

The author, a national MSNBC correspondent, analyzes the different responses to the American racial divide by Barack Obama, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and the Democratic Party.

E907 .R45 2015

The Sisters Are Alright: Changing the Broken Narrative of Black Women in America

By Tamara Winfrey Harris

The author tells her story as a black woman in America and encourages black women to be themselves rather than conforming to others’ ideals.

E185.86 .W5565 2015

Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle

By Kristen Green

This book tells the true story of a Virginia town that refused to integrate after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

LC214.22.V8 G74 2015x

Taking on Diversity: How We Can Move from Anxiety to Respect

By Rupert W. Nacoste

A campus “diversity doctor” shares his techniques for maintaining fairness and respect while still preserving differences in our current multicultural society.

HM1106 .N33 2015

The Tyranny of the Meritocracy: Democratizing Higher Education in America

By Lani Guinier

The author outlines ideas for ensuring that ethnic minorities have positive experiences at elite American universities.

LA227.4 .G85 2015

Where Everybody Looks Like Me: At the Crossroads of America’s Black Colleges and Culture

By Ron Stodghill

The author argues that historically black colleges and universities are currently under threat from numerous sources.

LC2781 .S76 2015x